

WOULD INCLUDE NON-MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE

Propose Amendment to Labor Resolution in Ontario Legislature

An opposition amendment calling for the appointment of a committee composed of equal numbers of employees, employers and members of the Legislature was introduced in the House last night following five hours of debate on the Government's resolution to appoint a select committee to study labor problems. The amendment sought to have the word "select" stricken from the Government's motion to enable persons outside the Legislature to be appointed to the committee.

The amendment was proposed by T. L. Kennedy (Prog. Con., Peel) during the evening session. The amendment will not be acceptable to the Government, Acting Premier Mitchell Hepburn said just before the House adjourned. The amendment will be discussed today when it is believed Premier Conant may be sufficiently recovered to attend.

Unions in Ontario are illegal combinations, in the absence of legislation to make them lawful, Mr. Hepburn told the Legislature at the afternoon session. He read a state-

ment to this effect from law officers of the Government. The acting leader explained to the House why the Government had decided to refer the labor issue to a committee rather than bring in a bill at this time.

Throughout the afternoon and evening sessions the Opposition hammered at the Government's labor policy, and Labor Minister Peter Heenan was subjected to vigorous criticism which culminated in the charge that he should be called "not Peter the Peacemaker, but Peter the Pliable." This charge was made by George S. Henry (Progressive Conservative, East York), who said Mr. Heenan was "willing to sit on the Treasury benches and throw his convictions to the wind." Men of strong convictions had resigned from Cabinet posts rather than sit by and see the things they stood for discarded, said Mr. Henry.

The Opposition amendment asked that a committee be named by the Prime Minister for the purpose of making inquiries and recommending the best methods for improving the relations between labor and management, assuring maximum war production and at the same time giving effective protection to the workers.

Dangerous Precedent.

Acting Premier Mitchell F. Hepburn said he would like to point out the danger of a precedent whereby employers and employees would be given "all the rights and privileges of members of this House." It might give, for instance, one employer an unfair advantage in being permitted to examine another employer of labor under oath.

The name of J. L. Cohen, labor lawyer, and now a member of the reorganized National War Labor Board, cropped up frequently in the debate. The Government was criticized for appointing Mr. Cohen to advise on the drafting of the labor legislation.

Ex-Premier Henry said Mr. Hepburn had consistently attacked the C.I.O., yet his Minister of Labor called in Mr. Cohen, the C.I.O. legal counsel, to help draft a labor bill. Mr. Hepburn said he had never attacked Mr. Cohen personally and had the highest respect for him both as an individual and as a lawyer.

One Progressive Conservative member suggested that Labor Minister Peter Heenan's usefulness as head of a Government department was at an end.

This charge was made by Goldwyn Elgie (Prog. Con., Woodbine), who described the decision of the Government not to introduce a collective bargaining bill as "political trickery." He accused the Government of lacking in sincerity and honesty, and added: "It must make one's conscience shudder when one hears the Government describe the C.I.O. as troublemaker, and then sees them hire a C.I.O. lawyer to help them prepare a labor bill."

Mr. Heenan made no reply to the attack directed against him by Mr. Elgie. He was angered when Leopold Macaulay (Prog. Con., York South) charged him with "lacking intestinal fortitude" in not threatening to resign, but let the remark go without comment.

"The Legislature is making a spectacle of itself," said Mr. Macaulay at the outset of his address. "Here are 90 members, and the most important matter to come before us in a long time finds no one impelled or compelled by their study of the matter to get up and express themselves."

Mr. Macaulay said the Minister of Labor had abdicated his functions in not outlining the principle he thought the committee should study. The Premier was equally guilty, he said. Instead of a bill incorporating the broad principles so frequently enunciated by both the Minister of Labor and the Premier, the Government was now asking that a committee be set up. This committee would degenerate into a "two-sided, bear-baiting contest." To ask the committee to work out a statesmanlike formula for a solution of the problems was straining Legislature machinery to the utmost, Mr. Macaulay said.

Should State Principle.

He believed that the short statement on labor made at the Progressive Conservative convention at Winnipeg "does set down in broad outline the principles on which we're going to settle the problem." He advocated handing it over, with consent of the Provinces, to a National Labor Relations Board, with capital and labor represented, though this could be done only in peacetime. If the Ontario Government had stated the principles of the labor bill and left the ramifications to a committee, it would, he felt, have discharged its duty.

He declared Labor Minister Heenan had promised representatives of the 2,000 employees of York Arsenal to sponsor a labor bill and believed

he threatened to resign if the Government didn't bring in a bill. This Mr. Heenan denied. Which brought from Mr. Macaulay the remark: "Didn't you? Well, I guess you haven't the intestinal fortitude I thought you had."

Mr. Macaulay likened the Labor Minister's action to the lead cow at the abattoir, leading the other cows to slaughter, then turning away and "waiting for the next bunch of boobs." "You led labor right up the chute," he said, "then did a little quiet detour to watch who'd get hit on the head. I'm sure there'll be a mallet wielded on somebody's head before the committee proceedings